

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01353 041547Z

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ACTION SS-30

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O 041511Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6315

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1353

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, US, EG

SUBJ: VIP AIRCRAFT CONFIGURATION FOR PRESIDENT SADAT

1. CHARLES THUM, PRESIDENT LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT SERVICE CO., ONTARIO, CALIFORNIA, MAX HELZEL, VICE PRESIDENT AND R.B. BROWN, SALES MANAGER, EUROPE, CALLED ON ME MORNING FEBRUARY 4 CONCERNING REQUEST FROM KAMAL ADHAM (KING FAISAL'S BROTHER-IN-LAW).

2. KAMAL ADHAM MET WITH THUM AND OTHERS BEIRUT FEBRUARY 2 AFTER JUST RETURNING FROM CAIRO. ADHAM INFORMED THEM THAT PRESIDENT SADAT WAS INTERESTED IN CONFIGURING AN AIRCRAFT PRESUMABLY NOW IN EGYPTIAN COMMERCIAL FLEET ALONG VIP LINES AND ADHAM WANTED LOCKHEED TEAM DISCUSS PROJECT DIRECTLY WITH SADAT. ADHAM HAD ONLY GENERAL IDEA OF WHAT SADAT WANTED AND UNINFORMED AS TO EXTENT OF VIP FURNISHING OF AIRCRAFT OR AS TO EXTENT COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT IF ANY REQUIRED. ALL ADHAM KNEW WAS THAT SADAT IMPRESSED WITH PLANE SECRETARY HAD DURING RECENT VISIT TO EGYPT AND WANTED VIP FACILITY FOR HIMSELF. LOCKHEED REPRESENTATIVE GAVE OFF CUFF ESTIMATED TO ME THAT PROJECT, DEPENDING ON WHAT IS REQUESTED, WOULD VARY FROM APPROXIMATELY \$1 1/2 MILLION FOR CONVERTING FORWARD SECTION OF AIRCRAFT TO SUITE CONFIGURATION WITHOUT COMMUNICATIONS TO \$4 TO \$5 MILLION FOR MAKING AIRCRAFT EQUIVALENT OF AIR FORCE I. BOTH LOCKHEED AND WE FIND IT

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DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT SADAT WOULD WANT ANYTHING AS

ELABORATE AS AIR FORCE I BUT AGAIN WE DON'T KNOW. LOCKHEED TEAM HAD IMPRESSION THAT SAUDIS WOULD PAY FOR PROJECT.

3. THUM AND OTHER TWO OFFICIALS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED LEAVE FOR CAIRO FEB. 5 VIA MEA AT 1300 LOCAL AND ARRIVE IN CAIRO 1450 LOCAL TO DISCUSS PROJECT, ACCORDING ADHAM'S INSTRUCTIONS, WITH PRESIDENT SADAT'S REPRESENTATIVES AND THEN WITH SADAT HIMSELF.

4. LOCKHEED UNDERSTANDABLY VERY INTERESTED IN PROJECT FROM COMMERCIAL POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, BEFORE DECIDING GO TO EGYPT, THUM WANTS TO KNOW IF THERE ANY POLICY OR TECHNICAL OBJECTIONS TO LOCKHEED'S INVOLVEMENT. THEY DO NOT WANT TO TALK TO SADAT AND LATER HAVE TO BACK OUT OF PROJECT. IN FACT THEY WILL NOT GO TO CAIRO IF DEPARTMENT HAS OBJECTIONS BUT WOULD HAVE TO SEND PERHAPS AN ENGINEER TO SATISFY ADHAM AND HIS EGYPTIAN CONTACTS. THUM OF COURSE WANTS CONSULT WITH AMBASSADOR EILTS BEFORE TALKING WITH EGYPTIANS AND PARTICULARLY SADAT AND WOUNDED, IF DEPARTMENT APPROVED PROJECT, AMBASSADOR MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE THEM LATE AFTERNOON FEB. 5.

5. I EXPLAINED STATE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH EGYPT AND TOLD THEM DOUBT IF FURNISHING FOR PLANE WOULD GIVE US ANY PROBLEM BUT THOUGHT COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT DEPENDING ON DEGREE OF SOPHISTICATION MIGHT.

6. APPRECIATE REPLY, IF ONLY INTERIM, BY OPENING BUSINESS BEIRUT TIME FEB. 5 IN ORDER THAT TEAM CAN MAKE THEIR ARRANGEMENTS.
HOUGHTON

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